

### Agency Activities and Monitored Issues

#### East Link moves forward

The East Link light rail project made significant progress in the fourth quarter of 2011. The agency received the Federal Transit Administration's Record of Decision (ROD) for the project and voted unanimously to begin final design on the route between Seattle, Mercer Island, Bellevue and Redmond. The ROD approval culminates more than five years of work to select the route. The agency also received the Federal Highway Administration's Record of Decision, which supports federal approvals for I-90.

In addition, Sound Transit and the City of Bellevue signed an agreement to build a tunnel through downtown Bellevue. Under the agreement, Bellevue will contribute \$100 million up-front with a \$60 million contingent contribution to help pay for the approximately \$276 million additional cost of building the tunnel. The agreement also outlines a collaborative partnership for Sound Transit and the City to work together during East Link's final design, permitting and construction to manage the project's costs and impacts.

Finally, after years of negotiation, Sound Transit and the State Department of Transportation signed a formal agreement that outlines the terms allowing the agency to build light rail across Lake Washington in the center lanes of I-90.

#### TBM breakthrough

One of the three University Link tunnel boring machines (TBM) recently completed its first trip from Capitol Hill to downtown Seattle. The TBM was then removed, re-assembled and trucked back to the Capitol Hill Station site where it will begin digging the second tunnel to downtown Seattle. The two TBMs digging from the University of Washington to Capitol Hill are also making good progress.

All three machines are scheduled to finish digging the U-Link tunnels in 2012. Passenger service is expected to begin in 2016.



#### North Corridor route moves ahead

The Sound Transit Board recently directed staff to move ahead with environmental studies for a light rail route running in the Interstate 5 corridor from the future Northgate light rail station to the Lynnwood Transit Center. The I-5 corridor and four potential stations will now be studied in a Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

The I-5 corridor was found to be the best alternative following 18 months of study that included looking closely at a mostly-elevated light rail route traveling along Highway 99. The exact I-5 route and stations will be determined following the issuance of the Final EIS and Board approval. Construction is expected to begin in 2018 with passenger service scheduled to start in 2023.

## Agency Activities and Monitored Issues *continued . . .*

### 2012 budget approved

Sound Transit's 2012 budget, which was unanimously approved by the Sound Transit Board, is just over \$1 billion and includes \$199 million for delivering train and bus service, \$733 million for capital projects and \$111 million for agency operations.

Highlights outlined in the budget for 2012 include continued work on University Link, starting final design on East Link and expanding Sounder train service to South Tacoma and Lakewood. The agency expects to carry more than 25 million passengers in 2012.

### New Board leaders

The Sound Transit Board approved its new leadership for the next two years. Pat McCarthy, Pierce County Executive, was unanimously approved as Board Chair, replacing Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon, who becomes a Board Vice Chair along with King County Councilmember Julia Patterson.

### Claudia Thomas leaves Board

Dr. Claudia Thomas, a Sound Transit Boardmember for the last 10 years including Vice Chair since 2008, attended her final Board meeting in December. To thank Boardmember Thomas for her years of service, the Sound Transit Board approved a proclamation in her honor and the employees held an appreciation celebration. Dr. Thomas retired from the Lakewood City Council after 16 years, including stints as Lakewood Mayor and Deputy Mayor.



**Joni Earl and outgoing Boardmember Claudia Thomas**

### TIGER grant

Sound Transit learned recently that it had received a \$10 million U.S. Department of Transportation TIGER (Transportation Investments Generating Economic Recovery) grant to help it extend Link light rail from Sea-Tac Airport to a new station at South 200<sup>th</sup> Street.

Competition for the grant was intense throughout the nation and Sound Transit was one of only two agencies in the state to receive funding. The agency had endorsements from Governor Gregoire, state legislators, labor, environmental advocates, residents and others that helped communicate the great need for the project.

### TIGGER grant

Sound Transit received a \$1.5 million TIGGER (Transit Investment for Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction) grant for an energy storage project.

The grant allows the agency to capture and re-use energy from the braking system on five Link light rail vehicles. The project will save energy and operating costs and is estimated to reduce the electricity consumed by all of Sound Transit's light rail vehicles by 4 to 5 percent. Sound Transit, along with TriMet of Portland, are the only two transit agencies in the nation to conduct this pilot project.

### Columbia City bike plaza opens

In October, Sound Transit opened a new bike plaza across from the Columbia City light rail station. The plaza includes parking for 54 additional bikes, including 46 lockers and an eight-bike rack.

The plaza was built in partnership with the federal government, which paid more than 85 percent of the cost.



**New Columbia City Bike Plaza**